

1896

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To

The Sanitary Authority
Urban Sanitary District
Wantage
Berks

Gentlemen

I have the honour to present to
your consideration, my Annual Report,
for the year 1896 dealing with the Sanitary
condition of the Wantage Urban District
of which I am Medical Officer of Health.

Vital Statistics

The Area is 2.296 acres.

The population at the last Census was 3,669

The Deaths registered, including the Workhouse
numbered 59, viz Wantage 46, Workhouse 13

which is equal to 16 per 1000 of the population
for the entire district, and for Wantage alone

12.5 per 1000, and excluding 4 who died
in the Cottage Hospital, and whose homes

are outside the District, we get a death

rate of 11.5 per 1000: as the death rate for
England and Wales averages 21, I think

our death rate of 11.5 is convincing
testimony of the healthiness of the town.

The Births were 105, equal to 28.6.
per 1000.

Deaths from Zymotic Diseases

There were 12 deaths under this heading, viz:
 3 from Diphtheria, 2 from Puerperal Fever,
 3 from Erysipelas, 3 from Diarrhoea, and
 1 from Whooping Cough.

Compared with the last 6 years, the figures are:

	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896
Whooping Cough	"	2	1	1	"	6	1
Typhoid Fever	"	"	1	"	"	1	"
Erysipelas	1	"	"	1	1	"	3
Diphtheria	"	"	"	1	"	"	3
Diarrhoea	"	1	3	1	"	3	3
Influenza	"	4	8	"	1	"	"
Measles	"	1	"	"	1	"	"
Puerperal Fever	"	"	1	1	"	"	2
Scarlet Fever	"	"	"	"	"	"	"

Diphtheria

35 cases were reported during the Year,
 3 of which proved fatal. This disease
 appears to be on the increase, and contrasts
 with other so-called Zymotic Diseases,
 which are steadily decreasing.

The conditions which favour its development
 are cold, damp, and especially over-
 crowding, with deficient ventilation,
 impure water, and bad drainage are
 also factors, but in a minor degree.

The indications for prevention, are
 warm, dry, well ventilated dwellings,
 isolation of the sick from the healthy,
 and generally strict cleanliness.

Typhoid Fever

No cases were notified to me, during the year, this is specially the disease of bad drainage -

Influenza

This epidemic disease seems at last to be disappearing, the cases during the past year, being neither so numerous nor so severe. The first cases occurred during the winter of 1889-90, and the disease has been more or less prevalent ever since. The previous visitation took place during 1847-8, an interval of 41 years has separated the present epidemic from its predecessor.

Scarlet Fever

There were only five cases during the year, and no deaths.

Small Pox

No case was reported during the year, vaccination has, in the vast majority of cases, effectually protected the young, and there were fewer cases of children remaining unvaccinated, than in any previous year, the object lesson taught at Lyons Center evidently being taken to heart - a great number of adults availed themselves of the safe guard of re-vaccination.

Whooping Cough, Measles, Typhus Fever

No cases of Typhus Fever occurred, the cases of Measles were mild: there was one death from Whooping Cough.

Phthisis

In my Report for 1895, I commented on the prevalence of this disease in Wautay, and its connection with damp, overcrowding, and bad ventilation, so I am pleased to be able to report a considerable decrease in its fatality, viz: from 8 in 1895, to 3 in 1896.

Drainage

The complete absence of diseases connected with defective drainage, is shown in the statistics of diseases and deaths.

This is indeed a very gratifying result, and speaks well for the sanitation of the town -

It is true that we have had a good deal of Diphtheria, but this disease has been very prevalent throughout England and is more directly connected with damp, and overcrowding, than with bad drainage -

Water Supply

The water supply is satisfactory: I would again urge the advantage of using the water supplied by the Water Company rather than that from wells, the vast majority of which are supplied by surface water, and are consequently liable to contamination.

Food

No complaints, as to the fitness of food, for human consumption, have been received during the year.

Lodging Houses

There need strict watching, as tramps frequently import diseases, and an outbreak follows.

Sanitary Staff

The Town Surveyor Mr. Belcher acts as Sanitary Inspector, and has always given me every assistance, in fact I cannot speak too highly of his help.

Sanitary State at end of the Year.

The Sanitary State is, I think satisfactory. Our low death rate, and small amount of infectious diseases, points to improved sanitation, and shows that the conditions of life, for the majority, have improved. Improvements of various kinds have taken place, better roads, old defective houses pulled down, and new ones erected.

There seems a tendency to build on the outskirts, rather than in the more central and crowded parts of the town.

Suggestions for the present Year.

Our aim ought to be, to provide the community with wholesome food, good drinking water, & pure air - our duty as practical Sanitarians to secure the conditions to bring about these results.

Summary of Work done during the year.

House inspected	150
Drains, Sewers etc	60
Wells -	30
Samples of water examined	40

Appended ~~in~~ the usual Tables of
Deaths, and Infectious Diseases.

Remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant

Thos. G. Innes, M.D.
Medical Officer of Health
Wantage

Wantage
Berks.

February 16th 1897 -

